IN HER ROOM
IN FRONT OF THE ENTRY-WAY
AT THE PARK

WAIT... BY SOME CHANCE, IS THIS WHAT THEY CALL BEING A...
STALKER!?
SLUMP
THIS MUST BE HOW CRIME CAME INTO BEING
SURELY THIS IS WHY..
BOING
BOING
BOING
WHAT'S MORE, IT DOESN'T EVEN LOOK AS THOUGH IORI-CHAN IS DOING ANYTHING ASIDE FROM WANDERING AROUND AIMLESSLY..
...RIGHT THEN
GASP
AT LONG LAST, SHE'S ABOUT TO DO SOMETHING OF CONSEQUENCE..!?

LET'S GO HOME.
STEP
STEP
FWUMP
CLATTER...
SHUT
I COULDN'T EVEN MANAGE...
TO COME UP WITH ANY WORTHWHILE RESULTS...

...AHH, BUT ENOUGH OF THIS ALREADY.
I'M BACK...
WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING...
TAP
TAP...
FLOP
AFTER ALL...
THE MYSTERY JUST ENDED UP GROWING EVEN FURTHER...
nuzzle
HAA...

ROLL OVER
I DIDN'T SEE A WHOLE LOT THAT IMPLIED ANYTHING ABOUT HER PERSONAL LIKES AND DISLIKES...
BUT SHE HELPED OUT WITH THAT ERRAND, AND HUNG OUT WITH THAT LITTLE KID FOR A SHORT WHILE...
SHE WAS SILENT THE WHOLE TIME, AND AS A RULE KEPT TO HERSELF...
SHE'S THE FRIENDLESS TYPE...!?
BADUM
BADUM
OHH... COULD IT BE THAT...
...SO?

BA——M
WHAT IS IT ABOUT THE TWO OF YOU COMING BACK AT THE SAME TIME THAT HAS YOU SMIRKING TO YOURSELF LIKE A CREEP?
WAAA! NOTHING! NOTHING AT ALL!!

RATTLE
THE TIME FOR DRINKS AMONGST THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS IS ABOUT TO COME TO AN AN END...
OUR GARDEN'S CHERRY TREES HAVE ALREADY SCATTERED A GREAT MANY PETALS...
CLINK...
IT REALLY WILL BE OVER SOON...

WHOOOO
SO UNTIL FLOWER WATCHING WRAPS UP FOR THE YEAR, LET'S JUST KEEP DRINKING!
KONOMI! GONNA NEED MORE ICE OVER HERE!
YEAH, YEAH, ALL RIGHT. YEESH, WHO THE HECK IS THIS MIDDLE-AGED MAN.
HOW LONELY~ I WONDER IF THE SCHOOL WILL LET YOU COME OUT AND PLAY~
AHH~ WHEN SPRING HOLIDAYS COME TO A CLOSE, KONO-CHAN IS GOING TO HAVE SCHOOL, RIGHT?
UNLIKE YOU, YORI-CHAN, IT'S ACTUALLY NORMAL FOR ME TO BE GOING TO SCHOOL!
YAHN
GEEZ, QUIT SAYING WEIRD STUFF..
Hey, I'm all out. Fill 'er up, would ya!
..THIS IS BAD

GRAB
IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN HELP YOU OUT WITH-
AH- KONOMI-CHAN!
IF THIS DUO HERE ENDS UP GETTING DRUNK, IT WON'T BE SAFE..!
GRIND
OKAY...
HANA-CHAN, KEEP ME COMPANY DURING MY EVENING DRINK!
GRIND
THOUGH IF IT DOES BECOME SUMMER, THEN THAT SUDACHI* TREE IN THE GARDEN WILL START TO RIPEN~
OHH, SO IT'S COMING THIS YEAR AS WELL?
THE TACHIBANA HOUSE DELUXE SUDACHI SOUR!
SUDACHI TREE?

*Sudachi: A sour, zesty Japanese citrus fruit. Tastes rather like a particularly strong lime.

THEY SAY THE OLD LADY THAT LIVED HERE PLANTED THE TREE
IN THE HOPE THAT "EVERY STUDENT WHO BOARDS HERE WILL SUCCESSFULLY LEAVE THIS LITTLE NEST* AS AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF SOCIETY."
IN THE GARDEN, THERE IS A SINGLE, SPLENDID SUDACHI TREE.
IF IT ISN'T ACTUALLY BEARING ANY FRUIT, THEN PERHAPS YOU WOULDN'T REALIZE...
GAHAHA...HA
GWEHH
S... SO BRUTAL!
KYA!
KYA!
BUT ON TOP OF ALL THAT, HER WISH STILL HASN'T COME TRUE! NOT EVEN ONCE!
HAGGARD
PLEASE... DON'T SAY THAT WITH SUCH RELISH...
HMM?
WHAT THE HECK? IT COULDN'T BE THAT HANA-CHAN MIGHT ACTUALLY INTEND TO LEAVE THIS PLACE, COULD IT?
EH!? NO NO, NOT A CHANCE-

*A play on words. Part of the polite form of the verb meaning "to leave the nest" (sudachi masu) and the citrus in question (sudachi) are homonyms. Additionally the name sudachi comes from a colloquialization of the name of a vinegar that used the fruit as the primary ingredient (Sudachibana, or Tachibana Vinegar).

CRASH
UWAAHHH!
YOU CAN'T!!
SQUEEZE
BE-CAUSE HANA-CHAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN A MEMBER OF OUR FAMILY~!
SQUEEZ
WAI-... YORI-CHAN!
!?
SQUEEZ
IT'S PAIN-FUL...
JOLT
EEK !?

2

IS THAT RIGHT~?
TRY TO WRIGGLE OUT OF OUR GRASP, AND YOU'LL SEE JUST HOW OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE YOU REALLY ARE...
NYUU

AHH..
FAREWELL, OH CHASTITY OF MINE...
HANG ON, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TWO DOI-
HANABI

I-IORI-CHAN...!?
STARE...
NO WAY...
"I'LL RESCUE YOU", IS THAT WHAT SHE-
HANABI...
SQUEEZE...
I'M GONNA THROW UP.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IORI-CHAN WOUND UP DRINKING ALCOHOL INSTEAD OF BARLEY TEA BY MISTAKE...
THUNK
THUNK
THIS IS SHOCHU?
WHOOSH
...SIGH.
LOOK, WE'VE ARRIVED AT YOUR ROOM, IORI-CHAN.
NOD
IS IT ALL RIGHT WITH YOU IF WE GO IN?
CREAK...
COME TO THINK OF IT, THIS IS MY FIRST TIME ENTERING HER ROOM DIRECTLY...
THOUGH I *DID* STUMBLE IN HERE DURING ALL OF THAT UNEXPECTED CHAOS...

HM...?
RUSTLE
HERE, LAY DOWN FOR A LITTLE BIT.
I WONDER IF THAT'S A PHOTO OF HER FAMILY...
GETS UP
THUD THUD
SLA
M
!?

WHA...
TURN
WHORA
OUR ROOMS ARE LINKED ANYWAY, SO GETTING RID OF THESE WILL MAKE THINGS EASIER.
RATTLE
WH-
WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING!?
RATTLE
BADUM
BAM
INTENSE
HANABI, I THOUGHT YOU LOVED ME.
HANABI.
THIS CONVER-SATION AGAIN...!

WHEN SOMEONE TELLS YOU THAT THEY LOVE YOU,
HOW ON EARTH IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MAKE YOU FEEL, I WONDER?
AH...
OF COURSE.

FOR TODAY,
...IORI-CHAN.
WHY DON'T WE SLEEP WITH THE SLIDING SCREEN OPEN?
THIS MOST LIKELY ISN'T AN ISSUE I SHOULD BE GETTING ALL WORKED UP ABOUT, THOUGH.
THE "LOVE" IORI-CHAN IS TALKING ABOUT
MIGHT BE THE SUBJECT OF A FAR LESS COMPLICATED DISCUSSION.

ZZZ
ZZZ
IT SEEMS AS THOUGH IORI-CHAN
ISN'T REALLY A BAD GIRL AFTER ALL.
KNOCK KNOCK
GASP
AH...!
THAT SOUND JUST NOW, DID IT COME FROM THE DIRECTION OF THE WINDOW...?
.....?

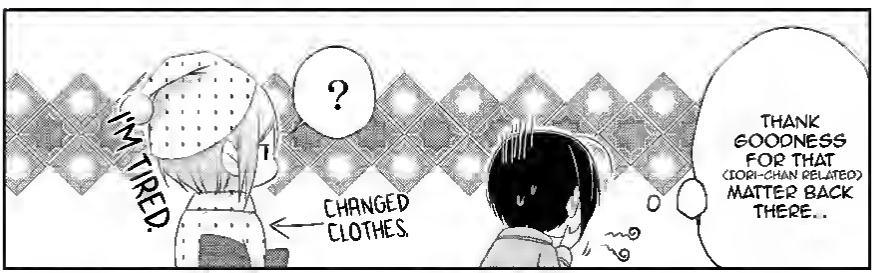
KONOMI-CHAN...!
WH-WHAT'S THE MATTER AT THIS LATE HOUR?
SORRY, DID I END UP WAKING YOU?
SINCE HANABI-ONEECHAN HAS HER DOOR LOCKED AT BEDTIME, I THOUGHT I SHOULD COME THIS WAY.
RATTLE RATTLE...
AH, NOT AT ALL, IT'S TOTALLY FINE~
OH CRAP... KONOMI-CHAN'S ROOM IS CONNECTED BY THE VERANDA
IF SHE SEES ANY OF THIS, SOMETHING AWFUL IS BOUND TO HAPPEN AGAIN...
HAH HAH...
GUOH!
WHY THE HECK ARE YOU SLEEPING TOGETHER——!!
SMACK
UM, HEY...
ABOUT THAT CHAT THAT WAS GOING ON IN THE LIVING ROOM JUST NOW, THOUGH...

I WONDERED WHETHER HANABI-ONEECHAN REALLY WOULD BE MOVING OUT..
AND ENDED UP FEELING KIND OF ANXIOUS...
AH.. SO IT'S ABOUT THAT.
THAT WAS BECAUSE YORIKO-SAN WAS ALREADY PRETTY DRUNK...
YOU KNOW,
PERHAPS I SHOULD SAY IT WAS MORE TO DO WITH YUU-SAN JUMPING TO CONCLU-SIONS...
UU
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THOSE CONCLUSIONS WEREN'T EXACTLY WRONG THOUGH, IT SURPRISED THE CRAP OUT OF ME!
BESIDES, I'LL BE LIVING IN THIS TOWN UNTIL I GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL AT THE VERY LEAST.
IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT!
OHH, I SEE.. SO THAT'S HOW IT IS THEN.

LOOM
(株)三受不動産
HMM...
I GUESS IT REALLY IS THE SEASON FOR MOVING IN, THERE'S NOTHING BUT EXPENSIVE VANCANCIES LEFT...
APARTMENTS TO LET
WHATEVER WAY YOU LOOK AT IT, A ONE MONTH LEASE IS JUST NOT HAPPENING, HUH...
AS A RESULT OF MY AUNT'S MISTAKE, I ACCIDENTALLY SIGNED INTO THE WRONG CONTRACT.
THE CONTRACT ESSENTIALLY STIPULATES THAT I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO REMAIN AT TACHIBANA HOUSE FOR AT LEAST ONE MONTH.

THANK YOU!
STAB
STAB
BUT HEARING EVERYTHING FROM YOU DIRECTLY REALLY PUT MY MIND AT EASE.
SLASH
I'M GLAD I'D BEEN REFLECTING OVER MY ACTIONS A BIT.
I BEGAN TO WONDER WHETHER I'D SAID NOTHING BUT HORRIBLE THINGS TO YOU, HANABI-ONEECHAN.
WELL,
I JUST WANTED TO SAY SORRY BEFORE GOING TO BED.
SO THAT'S PRETTY MUCH IT.
AHH~ DAMN IT...
THANK YOU!
THIS IS STILL JUST GONNA END UP HURTING HER FEELINGS WHEN I DO MOVE~!!
PAT
PAT
GOODNIGHT! SEE YOU TOMORROW, OKAY~?
PUEM...
HANABI...?

WHY'D SHE TAKE THEM OFF!!!
WH...
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
RATTLE...
THAT REMINDS ME, WHAT WERE YOU DOING AT THE REAL ESTATE AGENCY TODAY?
YOU SEEMED TO BE FIXATED ON IT WITH A VERY MYSTERIOUS LOOK ON YOUR FACE-
UNF
UM...
THIS IS..
SHAKE
SHAKE
PRIOR STATEMENT...
WITHDRAWN.
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE



To be continued!

SIGH
MY STOMACH IS STARTING TO TURN FROM ALL THE WORRISOME THOUGHTS...
THE GIRL WHO USED TO LIVE NEXT DOOR TO HER HAS CHANGED...
FOR SOME REASON, KONOMI-CHAN IS ANGRY
WHIRL
WHUOAH
?
THUNK
I- IORI-CHAN!
WHAT ARE YOU UP TO IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?
YAOYA
MARKET PLAC
NO- NOTHING REALLY...
GASP

YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, COULD STAND TO FEEL A BIT MORE CONCERN
IT'S NOTHING!
IORI-CHAN, WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?
PEEK
?
YAOYA
SHOP-PING. YORIKO ASKED YOU TO TAKE CARE OF IT.
!
AH... IT'S TRUE, A MESSAGE REALLY DID COME FROM YORIKO-SAN...
SORRY, YOU ENDED UP GOING ON THE ERRAND INSTEAD...
IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
OH YEAH, ALSO...!!
?
SHOPPING

PANIC
PANIC
THERE WAS A TV SHOW I WANTED TO WATCH!
I'VE ALREADY FINISHED UP MY ERRANDS, SO LET'S HEAD BACK TOGETHER!
?
?
UNDER-STOOD.
..BUT IT'S NOT AS THOUGH SHE DOESN'T LIKE ME.
FLUTTER
I'M SURE IORI-CHAN IS A LITTLE WEAK IN THAT AREA TOO.
I'VE DONE NOTHING BUT STUDY SINCE MOVING TO TOKYO DURING MY THIRD YEAR OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL..
THAT MIGHT BE WHY MY ABILITY TO COMMUNI-CATE WITH OTHERS MY OWN AGE REMAINS WEAK EVEN AS I GROW OLDER
I MEAN, THAT FIRST IMPRESSION SHE GAVE WAS...

SPARK
EVEN IF IT IS BETWEEN GIRLS, FULL FRONTAL NUDITY IS...
UWOAH
?
WHOOOOSH
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
PANTIES
NOTHING, REALLY...

PEEK
WELCOME BACK, HANABI-ONEECHA...
CLATTER CLATTER...
HEY~ WE'RE BACK~
GEH
AH, NO, WE JUST MET ON MY WAY BACK FROM SHOPPING...
SINCE THE SAKÉ YUU-SAN ASKED ME TO GRAB WAS PRETTY HEAVY, IORI-CHAN WAS JUST HELPING ME OUT...
OHH?
AND WHY THE HECK IS LITTLE MISS EROTIC WITH YOU?

EVER SINCE THAT LITTLE INCIDENT THE OTHER DAY, IT SEEMS LIKE..
KONOMI-CHAN LOSES IT ANY TIME IORI-CHAN AND I DO ANY-THING AS A PAIR.
HANABI.
SO, NO BIG DEAL REALLY?
IT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME EITHER WAY!!
THAT IS ABSO-LUTELY, 120% NOT THE CASE!
IS IT OKAY TO LET YOU HANDLE IT FROM HERE?
AH, SURE
THANK YOU...
CREAK
CREAK...
SHE'S GONE OFF..
HOW DO I PUT IT.. I DON'T QUITE UNDER-STAND HER

I WONDER WHERE IORI-CHAN CAME FROM..
AND WHY SHE CAME HERE...
COME TO THINK OF IT, I HAVEN'T REALLY LEARNED ANYTHING ABOUT HER...
DOES HANABI LOVE ME?
GASP
I DON'T THINK SHE'S A BAD PERSON, THOUGH...
THAT'S IT!
LET'S TRY SECRETLY FOLLOWING HER!
HASN'T REALIZED THAT SHE COULD JUST ASK DIRECTLY
TA
DA